

The State of Texas




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John Steen
Secretary of State

ELECTION ADVISORY **No. 2013-14**

TO: All Counties, County Chairs, Cities, School Districts, and Other Political Subdivisions

FROM: Keith Ingram, Director of Elections 

DATE: October 24, 2013

RE: Substantially Similar Names and Voting

Our office would like to remind all election officials about the proper procedures regarding the substantially similar name procedure at polling places.

Please remember that voters' names, as they appear on their IDs and the list of registered voters, do not have to be identical or exact matches to vote. If a voter's name is not identical, but is substantially similar, the voter will need to initial the similar name affidavit, and then proceed as usual to vote a regular ballot.

Voters do not need to show additional documentation if their names are identical or substantially similar. No voter should be turned away, and voters with substantially similar names should be offered a regular ballot - not a provisional ballot.

Please contact our Legal Team at (800) 252-2216, option 2 if you need additional assistance or have any questions on applying substantially similar name standards. If you have questions on updating a voter's registration in TEAM after they complete a name update form, please contact our VR Team at (800) 252-2216, option 1.

The following categories are examples of names that are substantially similar:

- 1. Initial, Middle and Former Names:** If a voter has an initial, middle or former name on their ID that does not appear on the list of registered voters, or vice versa, it is a substantially similar name.

Please note that this category will include women that have changed their name or hyphenated their name due to marriage or divorce.

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ELECTION ADVISORY

No. 2013-14

Page 2

Please consider the following examples on substantially similar names that we've put together using the names of famous Texans:

List of Registered Voters	Name on ID	Note
Carole Keeton Rylander	Carole Keeton Strayhorn	Ms. Strayhorn's former name, "Rylander" appears on the list of voters, but not the ID.
Lyndon Johnson	Lyndon Baines Johnson	President Johnson's middle name appears on the ID, but not the list of registered voters.
Barbara Bush	Barbara Pierce	Ms. Bush's former name/maiden name "Pierce" appears on the ID, but not the list of registered voters.
Audie L. Murphy	Audie Murphy	Mr. Murphy's initial appears on the list of registered voters, but not the ID.
Beyonce Knowles-Carter	Beyonce Giselle Knowles	Ms. Knowles-Carter's middle name appears on the ID, but not the list of registered voters.

2. **Names Appearing in Different Fields:** If a voter's names as they appear on the list registered voters and ID occupy different fields, the names are substantially similar.

Please note that this category will include women that have changed their name or hyphenated their name due to marriage or divorce.

Please consider the following examples:

List of Registered Voters	Name on ID	Note
Sandra Day	Sandra Day O'Connor	Justice O'Connor's maiden name "Day" occupies the last name field on the list of registered voters, but occupies the middle name field on the ID.
Beyonce Knowles-Carter	Beyonce Knowles	Ms. Knowles-Carter's maiden name is kept as her last name, and occupies a part of the last name field, but not the complete field.

ELECTION ADVISORY

No. 2013-14

Page 3

		We consider this a different field substantially similar name.
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- 3. Customary Variation of Names:** If a voter has a customary variation of their given name on either the list of registered voters or their ID, the names are substantially similar.

Please consider the following examples:

List of Registered Voters	Name on ID	Note
Sam Houston	Samuel Houston	Sam is a customary variation of Samuel.
Esperanza Andrade	Hope Andrade	Secretary Andrade's given name is Esperanza which is Spanish for Hope, and a customary variation of Esperanza.

- 4. Slightly Different Names:** If a voter's name on the list registered voters is slightly different than their name as printed on their ID, or vice versa, the names are substantially similar.

Please note this category encompasses voters whose names have been misspelled on their ID or the list of registered voters, including common different spellings, e.g. Marc/Mark or Nancy/Nanci as noted below.

Please consider the following examples:

List of Registered Voters	Name on ID	Note
Dorris Miller	Doris Miller	Mr. Miller's name was spelled with one "r" – Doris.
Nanci Griffith	Nancy Griffith	Ms. Griffith's name is spelled "Nanci."
Marc Cuban	Mark Cuban	Mr. Cuban first name is spelled "Marc" with a "c."
Jamie Fox	Jamie Foxx	Mr. Foxx's last name is "Foxx" not "Fox"

ELECTION ADVISORY

No. 2013-14

Page 4


Totality of the Circumstances

Please remember that election officials should use all information available to them when making a determination on substantially to assist the voter. In the example below, the list of registered voters has “Claudia Lady Bird Taylor” but the driver’s license has “Lady Bird Johnson.” In comparing the names, the election official should also compare the address, date of birth, and photograph to assist in making a determination and assist in verifying the voter’s identity. In this case, the address and date of birth match exactly, which should assist the election official in verifying Ms. Johnson’s identity.

TEXAS SECRETARY of STATE
 JOHN STEEN

Totality of the Circumstances

- Claudia Alta “Lady Bird” Taylor Johnson



Texas Driver License

Lady Bird Johnson
 123 Texas Way
 Austin, Texas 71234

Date of Birth: 12/22/1912

Precinct 1 – Travis County
 List of Registered Voters

Claudia Lady Bird Taylor
 123 Texas Way
 Austin, Texas 71234

Date of Birth: 12/22/1912

10/24/2013
Texas Secretary of State Elections Division
10

